



April 17, 2008

Chair Susan Golding and
Members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force
1416 9th Street #1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cc: Melissa Miller-Henson and Ken Wiseman

RE: Support for Proposal 1-3

Via electronic mail

Dear Chair Golding and Members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force,

I am writing on behalf of Surfrider Foundation in regards to the draft MPA proposals that you will be evaluating at your April 22 and 23 meetings. The Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our coasts and oceans by all people.

The Surfrider Foundation encourages you to choose Proposal 1-3 as your preferred alternative. We feel that Proposal 1-3 is the “balanced” proposal, in that it will provide strong protection throughout the North Central Coast, as well as in key local areas, and has managed to successfully sustain cross-interest support.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force has voiced its high regard of cross-interest support—we at Surfrider Foundation echo this view. Cross-interest support is very important to our organization, as our members represent a broad range of interests—conservationists, consumptive users, and non-consumptive users. Proposal 1-3 is the only proposal to have earned cross-interest support from the participating stakeholders, and it has earned the cross-interest support of our members. In this light, we feel that Proposal 1-3 has the best chance of being embraced as a component of a statewide network of marine protected areas.

Most importantly, Proposal 1-3 has strong conservation value *in addition* to cross-interest support. While Proposal 4 might have the strongest conservation value, Proposal 1-3 also received consistently high marks from the Science Advisory Team and provides strong protection to the right places. These important places include key areas like Saunder’s Reef, the habitat north of Salt Point to Rocky Point, Bodega Head, Duxbury Reef, and Moss Beach. While establishing areas of strong protection, this proposal also promotes a range of uses within and outside of its marine protected areas and manages to keep economic impacts relatively low. This kind of balancing act is quite a challenge and Proposal 1-3 meets that challenge.

In sum, the Surfrider Foundation supports Proposal 1-3 as the “balanced” proposal and we urge the Blue Ribbon Task Force to recommend this proposal as its preferred alternative.



Additionally, the Surfrider Foundation would also like to provide comment on special closures. There is no doubt that special closures can serve as an important conservation tool and extend conservation benefits to marine mammals and seabirds that are not afforded by MPAs; however, just as the MLPA Initiative seeks to balance conservation goals with consumptive uses, it is important that we arrive at a balance between the conservation goals of the special closures and uses these closures would impact.

Beyond an initial scoping process, an analysis of uses that would be impacted by these closures has not been done. Surfrider Foundation recognizes that special closures are not a type of marine protected area and that special closures are not necessarily part of the MLPA Initiative, but in an effort to maintain consistency with the MLPA Initiative process and honor the trade-offs that occur in restricting access to coastal-dependent activities, a similar level of analysis should be required of special closures as is required of marine protected areas. If special closures will be considered in the South Coast or other future study regions, it is critical to set a good precedent in the current study region and establish a clear procedure for their inclusion and review in the South Coast.

It is important to note that Surfrider Foundation does not necessarily oppose any of the proposed closures in the North Central Coast Study Region, but we are seriously concerned with the process being used to establish them and the implications it could have on this and future study regions of the MLPA Initiative. If the Blue Ribbon Task Force feels compelled to support the use of closures, we ask that you consider the balancing concept put forth in this letter and apply it to your deliberations, given the available information on uses, focus species, and conservation goals identified in the Special Closures Workgroup documents. In applying a very general balancing approach to the closures on the table, we feel a good example of this achieved balance is exemplified by the 300 foot closure proposed at the Southeast Farallon Island in Proposal 4. Its conservation objective is to protect the largest breeding bird colonies and diverse marine mammal use from disturbance, but its design also accommodates the use of Fisherman Cove and East Landing for safe anchorage.

Sincerely,

Sarah Corbin
Central California Regional Manager
Surfrider Foundation